

June, 2004



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# The Windsock

## Spring 2004 stubble soil moisture levels

Spring soil moisture levels are below normal for most of the province. As of May 1st 2004, approximately 80 per cent of Alberta's agricultural area had moisture levels low enough that above normal, well-timed rains will be needed to get average crops. However, of this area, only three per cent did not have enough moisture for germination. Soil moisture conditions were drier this year than 2003 but not as dry as 2000 and 2001.

The 2004 Spring Stubble Soil Moisture Map shows that none of the agricultural area was classified in the High category, 21 per cent was in the medium, 76 per cent was in the Low to Moderately Low, and three per cent was in the Very Low category.

Areas in the Very Low category have insufficient moisture for adequate germination. Areas in the Low to Moderately Low category require precipitation within two to

four weeks to maintain crop growth. Due to winds and minimal early spring precipitation, seedbeds in much of the area south of Highway 1 and through the Stettler to Medicine Hat areas were dry and require precipitation immediately. Crops in the areas in the Medium category can withstand moderate dry periods and near normal precipitation should result in average yields.

Areas classified as Medium include the area from near Peace River, south to High Prairie and west to Slave Lake, an area along the Saskatchewan border west to Lac La Biche and south to Wainwright with a neck that stretches west through the Edmonton area and Drayton Valley, and a small area around Claresholm. Three areas had Very Low soil moisture; the area from Consort to Oyen and west toward Hanna, an area around Jenner, and an area from Bassano to Glechien. The remainder of the agricultural area was classified as Low to Moderately Low.

Since the completion of the survey,

there has been some precipitation in the western parts of the province that has improved the seedbed moisture and in some areas added to the subsurface moisture. More late spring precipitation is required to significantly improve conditions and timely rain will be needed throughout the growing season to produce crops due to the dry subsurface soil.

The Spring Stubble Soil Moisture map is based on soil sampling of about 300 cereal or oilseed stubble fields in the agricultural area of Alberta during April. The moisture categories are based on dryland stubble fields with medium textured soils. The map, as well as historical information, is available on the Alberta Agriculture Food and Rural Development website at <http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca>

### For more information, contact:

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Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural  
Development  
Phone: (780) 427-3594

## Calendar of Events

- SAAA AGM - Saskatoon Inn, Saskatoon, SK, Oct 27-29, 2004
- MAAA Fall Board Meeting - Portage la Prairie, MB, Nov 4, 2004
- AAAA AGM - Red Deer Lodge, Red Deer, AB, Nov 15-16, 2004
- CAAA AGM - Hotel Vancouver Fairmont, Vancouver, BC, Feb 24-26, 2005

*Congratulations  
to Jennifer Kinniburgh  
& James Spence  
on their recent  
engagement*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY JAMES SPENCE

**A**s I write this, some applicators in the province are already taking bookings for brush control applications and some farmers are looking at pre-emergent applications or determining their Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs. Recent frost and cold weather has delayed seeding in some areas and precipitation levels are currently below, or well below, average across much of the province.

With the cost of fuel, insurance and everything else rising dramatically, I hope everyone will raise their prices this year so we don't have disproportionate pricing in our industry. Some line companies are even dropping custom ground application services from their "menu" of supplied services so we should have less competition with the ground rigs.

Grasshopper forecasts are expected to be severe again this year and the government is already preparing another rebate program similar to last year. Of special note is that some areas are forecast to be 20% or higher than last year for severity of grasshopper infestation and damage. Applicators may wish to consider setting up provisions with their local County or Municipal District to spray road allowances and ditches for grasshopper control. This spraying can be done at the same time as you do the fields you have been hired to spray. You may find this will increase your profit margin and the morale of the local farming community. However, it does also add some risk to the applications, by flying over tree lines and power lines, as well as the extra hazard of watching for traffic on adjacent roads.

I met with Don Matthews, President and CEO of Aviation Alberta, in early April, to further discuss how our Associations can benefit each other. A thank you goes out again to Don for taking some time from his schedule to come to Bonnyville for a visit. Since our last newsletter, the Alberta Representatives for the new Prairie Aerial Certification Committee (PACC) have been chosen by the 4A's Directors. I would like to thank all those who submitted their name for these 3 committee positions.

My attention currently, is being drawn towards finalizing details for a trip to Australia in early June. I will be attending the Aerial Agricultural Association

of Australia Convention June 7-10 in Queensland Australia. I will be acting primarily as a representative of Bonnyville Air at the P&WC booth but I will also be acting as an ambassador of my Provincial and National Association to the Aussie's. I hope to bring back new knowledge to our members relative to how other applicators around the globe succeed in Aerial Application. It will be interesting to see how the Australians are coping with the drought that has affected many parts of the country for years now.

In closing, I would like to remind everyone to be active in watching for additional hazards we are faced with each year, such as increased oilfield activity and rural development. Have a safe, profitable and relatively stress-free season everyone.

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## Media Advisory - April 7, 2004

### Prairie Provinces Collaborate for Aerial Applicator Continuing Education Program

**Immediate Release** – Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba regulators have combined their efforts to ensure that Aerial Pesticide Applicators can recertify by attending approved continuing education courses. The Prairie Aerial Certification Committee, the first of its kind, was established March 18, 2004 to harmonize ongoing training for Aerial Applicators.

“The Prairie Aerial Certification Committee (PACC) process was established first in Alberta to review and approve seminars for credits towards re-certification of provincial aerial applicators. Now we’ve made it available in the three prairie provinces,” announced Vivianne Servant, Pesticide Certification Specialist, Alberta Environment. “The committee will ensure the approved seminars meet the National Standard for Pesticide Education, Training and Certification.”

“To receive an Aerial Pesticide License, an applicator must initially pass a nationally approved written exam.” said Cameron Wilk, Provincial Pesticide Management Specialist, Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food. “Every 5 years the applicator must re-certify his license.”

The Continuing Education Program allows an applicator to re-certify by obtaining 15 Continuing Education Credits within their five-year certification period. “The PACC will approve the sessions and assign the appropriate number of credits per session. The committee is comprised of industry representatives, government regulators, and provincial education institutions, in the three provinces.” advised Terry Waddell, Program Coordinator, Agriculture Training, Assiniboine Community College. “This provides an excellent opportunity to work together on the initiative.” The success of the Continuing Education Credit system, used in Alberta for the past two years, has encouraged both Saskatchewan and Manitoba to offer the alternative re-certification option.

*(Continued on page 4)*



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## *It's a Girl*

*Congratulations to  
Shaun & Stacey Kinniburgh  
on the birth of their daughter Marissa Lynne  
'The first girl in two generations'  
Congratulations to the happy grandparents  
Tom & Brenda Kinniburgh.*

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“Our applicators are concerned about human health, the environment, and maintaining a professional industry standard. This program assists our applicators take advantage of an excellent opportunity for on-going education and updating in our industry.” indicated Lorin Rubbert, President, Canadian Aerial Applicators Association. “The CAAA feels this unique approach to learning with continuing training being provided over five years, is extremely valuable.”

The program will be fully operational by October 1, 2004. A phase-in period for applicators requiring re-certification over the next two years has been established.

*Participants on the PACC are:*

Alberta Environment, Edmonton  
 Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food, Regina  
 Manitoba Agriculture and Food, Winnipeg  
 SIAST, Regina  
 Lakeland College, Vermillion  
 Assiniboine Community College, Brandon  
 Alberta Aerial Applicators Association, Edmonton  
 Saskatchewan Aerial Applicators Association, Regina  
 Manitoba Aerial Applicators Association, Winnipeg  
 Canadian Aerial Applicators Association, Edmonton

For further information contact:

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